

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A-31

NEW YORK TIMES  
6 MAY 1983

# Blame The C.I.A., But Also Blame the Sandinists

By Arturo Cruz Sequeira

WASHINGTON — The activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in Nicaragua are clearly wrong and mis-conceived. The concern of the American people and Congress about the scope of these activities is justified. However, I believe that it is a mistake to argue that if the covert activities against Nicaragua were to cease, there would be peace and political stability in my country. This argument is as simplistic as the Reagan Administration's argument about El Salvador: It ignores the social and political realities of Nicaragua.

The actions of the C.I.A. — and the orthodoxy of the Reagan Administration — are only part of the problem. Equally to blame, and politically not dissimilar, is the ideological orthodoxy of the directorate of the Sandinist Government. The C.I.A. did not invent the discontent of the Miskito Indians, the Nicaraguan peasants and the small proprietors in the cities. Certainly it was not the C.I.A. but rather the Sandinist directorate that confronted Pope John Paul II in our deeply Roman Catholic country, showing arrogance and great political immaturity.

Similarly, Ronald Reagan's ideological primitivism is not alone responsible for linking the Central American crisis to the global East-West conflict. The revolutionary commanders' excessive and unnecessary pro-Soviet attitude is also at fault. The Soviet Union has merely taken advantage of a situation created by Mr. Reagan and the Sandinist directorate together.

The two orthodoxies — of the Reagan Administration and the Sandinist directorate — feed off and support each other. On the one hand, the Sandinists use President Reagan's policies to narrow political latitude within the country and even the Sandinist party itself. On the other hand, the Reagan Administration exploits the hasty political radicalization of the Sandinist experiment to rationalize United States policy in Central America — particularly toward El Salvador.

I can understand the roots of dissatisfaction with the Reagan Administration's policy. But my greatest concern in the debate on Central America is those liberals who in their effort to oppose the Reagan orthodoxy could become apologists for the orthodoxy of the Sandinist front.

Even if Congress is able to prohibit Central Intelligence Agency actions in Nicaragua, even if the leaders of the counter-revolution were to retire to their natural habitat in Key Biscayne, Fla., and even if the foreign ministers of Panama, Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico were successful in their search for peace among the Central American states, Nicaragua would continue in crisis. This is true not only because of the endemic economic problems in the region but also because of the political dissent in Nicaragua — dissent that has deep social roots and is not subject to decisions of Mexican and Venezuelan foreign ministers.

Unless the Sandinist revolution can revive its early broad-based support and can show greater tolerance for others' autonomy in civil society — even if there is substantial financial aid from outside — the economic crisis will continue and social polarization will grow. Unless the Sandinist leaders are less absolutist, they will face such grave internal conflicts that they will be tempted to militarize the whole of society.

The only way to prevent a second Nicaraguan civil war, to isolate the counter-revolutionary forces and to recover the original impulse of the revolution that showed so much promise in 1979, is to support negotiations among those parties and groups that still maintain some political legitimacy.

A historical compromise in Nicaragua would also give greater credibility to the intentions of the revolutionaries in El Salvador, setting a genuinely democratic revolutionary agenda in Central America.

Reasonable members of Congress surely have an obligation to prevent the unauthorized activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in Nicaragua, but they must not stop there. They must not ignore the necessity for negotiations in Nicaragua.

Representative Michael D. Barnes and 16 more Democrats began to outline such a policy in December 1982, in a paper titled "U.S. Policy Towards Central America: A Democratic Alternative." It states: "We believe that an effort to reconcile Nicaraguan opposition groups, including democratic exile groups, with the Government of that country through a negotiating process or other mutually acceptable means should be strongly encouraged."

In the intervening months, this message has been muted amid concern about paramilitary activities on the border between Nicaragua and Honduras. It is time to stress its importance again.

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